



The Phoenix Family Readiness Group Newsletter
1st Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division (M)
Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07



Issue 27 ~ 16-31 October 2006

October has ended and the 1st Special Troops Battalion continues to its perform its missions extremely well. As we begin preparing to return home, we are proud of what we have accomplished, but are still focused on our daily tasks. In this edition, the Renagades highlight the accomplishments of the Brigade Tactical Assault Center (TAC); SSG Rodriguez from HHC's Military Police Platoon sends a letter to the families of his Soldiers; Alpha Company's Human Intelligence Platoon recounts their accomplishments over the past year, and there is an article from Bravo Company's Network Operations Section.

RENEGADES

An Update from HHD

By CPT Walker, HHD Commander

Hello Renegade Families, yet another month has come to a close, and this one has indeed been a tough one. We have had a lot of heroes in the company this month, and we have had some tough jobs. While our Job is not finished yet, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Next month, we will begin to receive 1st CAV, and while they will have their work cut out for them, they will get to build on the accomplishments of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, and all the Renagades accomplishments.

This month, as usual, I will talk a little about some of our reenlistments,

and some of the awards given. But some of the actions I will talk about are especially touching, due to the heroics and bravery and hard work of our Renegade Soldiers.

First, I would like to congratulate a couple of people on Reenlistment, SPC Ross Salwoke, from PAO re-enlisted for FT. Bragg. He says he wants to go airborne and try to head over to Afghanistan.



SPC Salwoke Reenlists

Next, I would like to congratulate a couple of Soldiers who I have already talked about in a previous FRG Letter. SFC Christopher Williams and CPL Brian Murray were both formally awarded the Purple Heart by the Brigade Commander. It was an honor and a privilege to watch them get their well deserved awards. Both Soldiers are doing very well. SFC Williams has made a full recovery after getting a little physical therapy at the Cobra Clinic, and CPL Murray has finally taken off his moon boot, and is walking a little straighter these days. We have also submitted over 20 Combat Infantry Badges and Combat Action Badges this month.

Many of these awards came from the Tactical Assault Center (TAC). They

had a tough couple of weeks down in a town called Saab al Boor. The town started to have some problems and many residents were moving out. The TAC was ordered in by the Brigade Commander to give him better situational awareness, and the boys did an outstanding job. Some of the insurgents weren't too happy the TAC were there, however guys like SFC Jorge Clavijo, SFC Paul Kavanaugh, and SPC Tate Shaneyfelt were not about to back down. By the time the TAC returned back to Camp Taji, the town was starting to pull itself together. There is still a lot of work to be done, but on my last trip to re-supply the TAC the children were starting to come out again and were waving at us. It was a good feeling.

As October ends, so ends Ramadan, the Holiest month for a Muslim. The weather is starting to cool. Next month will be busy for the Renegades, while we have many preparations to do to come home; we also have a Mission to complete. Again Renegade families, your Soldiers have stood strong this month, as we will stand strong next month. Thank you for your support and your strength as well. For many of us, it is you at home from whom we draw our strength, and our hope.

Until next time, this is Renegade 6 out.

HURRICANE

Military Police Platoon

By SSG Richard Rodriguez, Squad Leader

Dear Family and Friends,

I am SSG Rodriguez, the man who has had the great honor of being

responsible for some of your husbands, fathers, children, and friends for the past year. I was sitting in my room last week, after another long day on the road in Iraq, and I was thinking of all your Soldiers and how much they mean to me. I kept thinking that I need to find a way to tell them thanks for all they have done for me this past year. Then I thought I needed to find a way to tell you thanks for all you have done for all of us. I hope that this simple letter can sufficiently convey all of my thanks.

First, thank you for trusting me with your loved ones. I told myself I wanted to lead the way I would want someone to lead my two sons. This year I have seen your loved ones do things that some of them thought they would never do:

I remember watching CPL Ross and his team, SPC Cesena and PFC Riehl help save a civilian who had been shot. When the squad was hit with its first IED and PFC Westcott was struck in the face with a small piece of shrapnel no one panicked; instead they all stayed calm and we were able to get through it without any further problems.

I also remember having to lend out SGT Carlson and his team, SPC Allen and SPC McVey, to lead a Civil Affairs team through some of the worst areas in our sector. They made no mistakes despite heavy enemy activity.

I'm proud that when CPL Johnson and his team, SPC Gilbert and PFC Walbeck, came over to my squad during the worst month we had in Iraq. The squad didn't miss a beat, despite them never having worked with us.

I remember my team, SPC Hernandez and SPC Grenstiener, going a whole month without a day off from missions. They knew I had to go every time and they wanted to go with me...

Lastly I remember the second week in April, when my Squad was tasked to conduct denial operations along a 13 kilometer stretch of the highway that leads to the heart of Baghdad. During that week my guys were faced with everything the enemy had and maneuvered through it without a hitch. That week I watched some of my guys with fear become fearless, some that were shy and unsure become confident, and most importantly I saw them trust each other without hesitation. That week they truly became a team and a family.

These are just a few examples of some of the things your loved ones did with me and for me. I could sit here all day and tell you how your loved ones are HEROES, but I think you already know that.

I want to thank all of you who sent the Soldiers boxes and letters. They really did help the morale of the Soldiers and made my job a lot easier. I especially wanted to thank the spouses for their very loving support.

Sometimes people think of Soldiers as being in uniform and on the front lines, but wives are the Soldiers right behind us; keeping us going and focused. I know for a fact that without my beautiful wife Marisa I would not be half the Soldier I am today.

I wanted to thank all of you for understanding that we are not politicians but Soldiers. We just answer the call to War when it comes.

I want to thank all of you for your prayers. I am certain that they have helped us. I know that there have been times out here where we all felt that somebody was watching us; because there was no other way we would have made it through an incident without them. We pray for God to go in front of us, to guide us, to watch over us, and be

with us in our hearts before every mission.

I want to thank you for the support you will give us this last month and a half, and for all you will do for us upon our return. I can assure you that your Soldier's are fighting hard and will not give one inch until we are safely back on home soil.

A Grateful Soldier,
SSG Richard Rodriguez Jr.

Revise: The Support Platoon Article that was featured in the last edition of the FRG Newsletter was written by 1LT Grover, Support Platoon Leader, Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

NIGHTHAWKS

The Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Platoon

By SGT Ritzler, SGT Danna, and SPC Bokor



The HUMINT Platoon

The HUMINT Platoon had a long and productive year. A little more than a year ago, the HUMINT Platoon came together. We were a group of strangers, young, with limited experience in conducting HUMINT operations during war time. As we prepare to leave Iraq and hand off our responsibilities to a new group of soldiers, the HUMINT platoon is now a family.

With strong bonds forged over a year of hard work, our Soldiers have run over 1300 missions outside of Camp Taji and produced over 1100 intelligence reports, helping to guide the brigade's targeting efforts. At the Division Holding Area Annex, members of HUMINT platoon conducted over 800 interrogations, helping in yet another way to support the brigade and protect our fellow Soldiers. Our HUMINT Soldiers went through every day, knowing that the information they collected would directly affect other Soldiers and possibly save lives. We helped to bring down our enemies and eliminate threats to Coalition Forces and those local Iraqis caught in the crossfire of the war on terror. There were many nights when we never left the office. We worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of their fellow Soldiers.

Our HUMINT Soldiers are now both tactically and technically proficient, having tested our skills in the theater of war. Through vehicle and foot patrols, and air assaults conducted with the units we support, the HUMINT Teams have earned the respect of the combat arms units and their Soldiers on multiple levels. This relationship has added a special understanding for how our work can affect the lives of our comrades in arms. We have pushed ourselves to our very limits to ensure that we help to forewarn and forearm the Soldiers on the battlefield with information that could save the lives of our friends.

The HUMINT Platoon has always had a reputation for being a little more "wild" and slightly more deviant than some other military intelligence fields, but our Soldiers are among the best and brightest. Our intelligence and tactical ability led to our ultimate success here in Iraq. In order to alleviate some of the stress and burn off a little of our playful

energy, CW 2 Hofmann started our weekly barbeque and our friendly late night volleyball games. He made sure that we had the opportunities to take a little down time, away from the daily stress. Both during down time and through the trials of the daily intelligence collection grind, CW2 Hoffman took care of us and mentored us to become the cohesive team we now are.

Under the duress and pressures of war, the HUMINT Platoon rose to meet all the challenges set before us and always succeeded. We will return home proud, knowing that our contributions to the fight directly impacted the success of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division's mission.



SPC Bokor and MG Thurman

EAGLES

Network Operations

By SPC (P) Lelacheur

By whatever name we are known, be it Tiger Team, Mighty NetOps, the Computer Geeks, or "those Phone Guys", we who comprise Bravo Company 1STB NETOPs have been a busy bunch. Our primary duty has been, and still is, to manage the configuration, maintenance and operation of the communications infrastructure for 1st

Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. We have - at times, by whatever means necessary- found the equipment, manpower and time to perform our duty.

It's not all work though. When the network is functioning well, we find time to relax and sports will most often be the topic of discussion. B. Co. NETOPs along with other members of Bravo Co. and the EOD security team enjoy planning, playing and giving each other a hard time about football. We fielded a team for the season's first F.O.B. wide football tournament. Unfortunately, our reign of terror lasted for the entirety of our first game losing 12-13.



**Our current Fantasy Football leader:
SSG Robinson**

For all of you at home, know that we are thinking about you, accomplishing our mission and making time for fun along the way.

PHOENIX 6

Hello from Camp Taji! We are entering our last month here and we are looking forward to coming home to take a little leave and rejoin our families. I can not express in words how proud I am of our battalion and how extremely well your soldiers have done these past 11 months! We are gathering up our soldiers, equipment, and preparing to receive the unit that will replace us. Our TUAV platoon and MP platoon will be back working in the battalion once again as well as the few soldiers remaining on MITT in early November. Thanks to the FRG leaders for a great redeployment VTC. It was wonderful to see everyone. The enthusiasm that they displayed carried through and spread like wildfire on our end!

Our hearts go out to SSG Ronald Paulsen and his family. SSG Paulsen was killed in action on 17 October 2006 when returning from a medical outreach operation near Camp Taji. He will remain in our thoughts and prayers - part of the STB team always.

Phoenix 6



To Dare Is To Do

**Larry A. Seaman
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army**

**John W. Cross
LTC, EN
Commanding**

